



MAYOR JOSEPH P. GANIM  
BRIDGEPORT, CT

## **Public Hearing Testimony – CGA Public Safety and Security Committee**

**Re: House Bill 7055**

**February 26, 2019**

Chairmen Bradley, Verrengia; Vice Chairs; Ranking Members; and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

My name is Joe Ganim, Mayor of Bridgeport—Connecticut’s largest city. Today, I am submitting testimony in support of House Bill 7055 *An Act Creating the Connecticut Gaming Commission and Creating a Competitive Bidding Process for a Resort-Casino*.

I am in strong support of an open, transparent, and fair process for the expansion of gaming in the State of Connecticut. I am not necessarily pro-MGM or pro-tribes, but rather, pro-Bridgeport. I believe that Bridgeport is a great city with a unique potential to help bring economic activity and vitality to the region.

I am in strong support of this legislation because I know the positive impact that a potential resort-casino on the waterfront in Bridgeport would have for the region. The economic development, number of jobs, and amount of additional revenue—both for the State and our municipalities—that a resort-casino would bring to Bridgeport and to the region are too great to pass up.

Bridgeport is currently experiencing one of the largest waterfront developments at Steele Point and Seaview Plaza on the East Coast of the United States. Strategically located between New York City and Boston, Bridgeport possesses both the workforce and the transportation infrastructure necessary to support a new resort-casino in the region. In fact, Bridgeport has access to I-95, Route 8, the Merritt Parkway, Metro North service, Amtrak service, the airport, and the Long Island Ferry, allowing for convenient transportation both for workers and visitors alike.

Bridgeport is a city with so much potential for growth, and we can see that with the number of economic development projects that are currently underway in the city. A resort-casino would make Bridgeport a destination for so many, and would put Connecticut's largest city on the next level. Such an attraction would be the closest major attraction of its type to New York City—closer than Atlantic City—and more attractive than the slot machines at the racetrack in Yonkers.

I can attest to the fact the vast majority of my constituents are in support of a resort-casino development in Bridgeport because they know the positive economic impact and the tax relief that it would bring. And, they are excited about new opportunities for entertainment, shopping, and dining that would become available to them.

Many of the people that I have spoken to in Bridgeport and in the region are also excited about the number of jobs that this development will create. We are talking about many thousands of construction jobs, and at least 2,000 permanent jobs post-construction. This is an economic game-changer for so many that live in my city and around Connecticut.

Furthermore, a resort-casino development worth hundreds of millions of dollars on Bridgeport's waterfront will only be the beginning. If such an attraction were to come to Bridgeport, it will undoubtedly unleash a renewed interest in Bridgeport and its surrounding towns, and the resulting economic activity and development will be felt throughout the entire region.

I urge the committee as it considers HB 7055 to allow for an open, transparent, and fair process to unfold and to allow for anyone who is qualified to compete for the opportunity to expand gaming in our state. I urge the committee to take very seriously the potential for increased economic activity, more jobs, and additional revenue that the expansion of gaming, especially a resort-casino in Bridgeport, would bring to the State of Connecticut.

I believe in Bridgeport's potential, and I urge this committee to pass HB 7055 and support the growth of the Bridgeport economy.

Sincerely,



Joseph P. Ganim  
Mayor